

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 2003-130-C - ORDER NO. 2003-732
DECEMBER 18, 2003

IN RE: Application of Ridley Telephone Company,)	ORDER
LLC for a Certificate of Public Convenience)	GRANTING
and Necessity to Provide Intrastate)	CERTIFICATE FOR
Telecommunications Services and for)	INTEREXCHANGE
Modified Alternative Regulation)	AUTHORITY AND
)	MODIFIED
)	ALTERNATIVE
)	REGULATION

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the "Commission") by way of the Application of Ridley Telephone Company, LLC ("Ridley" or the "Company") requesting a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity authorizing it to operate as a reseller of interexchange telecommunications services within the State of South Carolina. The Company's Application was filed pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §58-9-280 (Supp. 2002) and the general regulatory authority of the Commission. By its Application, Ridley also requests alternative regulation of its business services offerings identical to that granted to AT&T Communications in Order Nos. 95-1734 and 96-55 in Docket No. 95-661-C and requested waiver of certain Commission regulations.

The Commission's Executive Director instructed Ridley to publish, one time, a Notice of Filing in newspapers of general circulation in the areas of the state affected by

the Application. The purpose of the Notice of Filing was to inform interested parties of the Application of Ridley and of the manner and time in which to file the appropriate pleadings for participation in the proceeding. Ridley complied with this instruction and provided the Commission with proof of publication of the Notice of Filing. No Petitions to Intervene or Protests were filed.

A hearing was convened on December 3, 2003, at 10:30 a.m. in the Commission's Hearing Room, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Chairman, presided. Ridley was represented by Bonnie D. Shealy, Esquire. Jocelyn Boyd, Esquire, represented the Commission Staff.

James Fiumara, the Managing Member of the Company, appeared and testified in support of the Application. The record reveals that Ridley is a privately held Delaware corporation headquartered in the State of Pennsylvania and registered to transact business in South Carolina as a foreign corporation. According to Mr. Fiumara, Ridley proposes to operate as a reseller of intrastate interexchange telecommunications services to the public on a statewide basis and to offer a wide range of "1+" interexchange telecommunications services on a resale basis. Specifically, Ridley seeks authority to provide MTS, out-WATS, in-WATS, and calling card services. Ridley's services will be provided to both residential and business customers, and Ridley will offer its services twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. The company plans to market its services through internet advertising and its internet services. The Company does not own any network switches or transmission facilities and will operate as a reseller of services. Mr.

Fiumara explained the Company's request for authority, and the record reveals the Company's services, operations, and marketing procedures.

Mr. Fiumara also discussed Ridley's technical, financial, and managerial resources to provide the services for which it seeks authority to provide. Mr. Fiumara offered that Ridley possesses sufficient financial resources to support its operations in South Carolina. A review of the financial documents submitted as an exhibit to the Application reveals a healthy current ratio. With regard to management and technical capabilities, Mr. Fiumara testified that Ridley currently has approximately 17,000 customers located in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Mr. Fiumara further testified as to his many years of experience in marketing, database management, media purchasing, product sourcing and customer service. Mr. Fiumara also testified that Ridley will operate in accordance with Commission rules, regulations, guidelines, and Commission Orders.

Mr. Fiumara offered that approval of Ridley's Application would serve the public interest by increasing the level of long distance competition in South Carolina, by providing a high-quality alternative of long distance service, and by increasing consumer awareness of options and services available, thus encouraging the growth and success of competitive services.

After full consideration of the applicable law, the Company's Application, and the evidence presented at the hearing, the Commission hereby issues its findings of fact and conclusions of law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Ridley is organized as a corporation under the laws of the State of Delaware and is authorized to do business as a foreign corporation in the State of South Carolina by the Secretary of State.

2. Ridley is currently licensed to operate as a telecommunications reseller in 40 states and the District of Columbia, has a substantial customer base, and has no reported record of violations of regulatory laws or regulations in the jurisdictions in which it is currently operating.

3. Ridley desires to operate as a non-facilities based reseller of interexchange services in South Carolina.

4. We find that Ridley, and Mr. Fiumara in particular, possess the managerial experience and capability to successfully operate a non-facilities based reseller of interexchange services in South Carolina.

5. We further find based on the financial records and balance sheets submitted by the Company that Ridley possess sufficient financial resources to provide the services as described in its Application.

6. We finally find that the issuance of a Certificate of Public Conveyance and Necessity to Ridley to operate as a reseller of interexchange telecommunications services in South Carolina would be in the best interest of the citizens of South Carolina by providing a high-quality alternative of long distance service, and by increasing consumer awareness of options and services available, thus encouraging the growth and success of competitive services.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Based on the above findings of fact, the Commission concludes that a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity should be granted to Ridley to provide intrastate interLATA service and to originate and terminate toll traffic within the same LATA, as set forth herein, through the resale of intrastate Wide Area Telecommunications Services (WATS), Message Telecommunications Service (MTS), Foreign Exchange Service, Private Line Service, or any other services authorized for resale by tariffs of carriers approved by the Commission.

2. The Commission adopts a rate design for Ridley for its resale of residential services which includes only maximum rate levels for each tariff charge. A rate structure incorporating maximum rate levels with the flexibility for adjustment below the maximum rate levels has been previously adopted by the Commission. In Re: Application of GTE Sprint Communications Corporation, etc., Order No. 84-622, issued in Docket No. 84-10-C (August 2, 1984).

3. Ridley shall not adjust its residential rates below the approved maximum level without notice to the Commission and to the public. Ridley shall file its proposed rate changes, publish its notice of such changes, and file affidavits of publication with the Commission two weeks prior to the effective date of the changes. However, the public notice requirement is waived, and therefore not required, for reductions below the maximum cap in instances which do not affect the general body of subscribers or do not constitute a general rate reduction. In Re: Application of GTE Sprint Communications, etc., Order No. 93-638, issued in Docket No. 84-10-C (July 16, 1993). Any proposed

increase in the maximum rate level for residential services reflected in the tariff which would be applicable to the general body of the Company's subscribers shall constitute a general ratemaking proceeding and will be treated in accordance with the notice and hearing provisions of S.C. Code Ann. §58-9-540 (Supp. 2002).

4. With respect to Ridley's business services, consumer card, and operator service offerings, the Commission adopts a relaxed regulatory scheme identical to that granted to AT&T Communications in Order Nos. 95-1734 and 96-55 in Docket No. 95-661-C. Under this relaxed regulatory scheme, tariff filings for business services shall be presumed valid upon filing. The Commission will have seven (7) days in which to institute an investigation of any tariff filing. If the Commission institutes an investigation of a particular tariff filing within the seven days, the tariff filing will then be suspended until further Order of the Commission. Any relaxation in the future reporting requirements that may be adopted for AT&T shall apply to Ridley also. These alternative regulation orders were modified by Order No. 2001-997 in Docket No. 2000-407-C which imposed a cap on operator-assisted calls where a consumer uses a local exchange carrier's calling card to complete calls from locations which have not selected the local exchange carrier as their toll provider. The provisions of Order No. 2001-997 and the modification contained therein also apply to Ridley.

5. If it has not already done so by the date of issuance of this Order, Ridley shall file its revised tariff and an accompanying price list within thirty (30) days of receipt of this Order. The revised tariff shall be consistent with the findings of this Order and shall be consistent with the Commission's Rules and Regulations.

6. Ridley is subject to access charges pursuant to Commission Order No. 86-584, in which the Commission determined that for access purposes resellers and facilities-based interexchange carriers should be treated similarly.

7. With regard to the Company's resale of service, an end-user should be able to access another interexchange carrier or operator service provider if the end-user so desires.

8. Ridley shall resell the services of only those interexchange carriers or LECs authorized to do business in South Carolina by this Commission. If Ridley changes underlying carriers, it shall notify the Commission in writing.

9. With regard to the origination and termination of toll calls within the same LATA, Ridley shall comply with the terms of Order No. 93-462, Order Approving Stipulation and Agreement, in Docket Nos. 92-182-C, 92-183-C, and 92-200-C (June 3, 1993), with the exception of the 10-XXX intraLATA dialing requirement, which has been rendered obsolete by the toll dialing parity rules established by the FCC pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (See, 47 CFR 51.209). Specifically, Ridley shall comply with the imputation standard as adopted by Order No. 93-462 and more fully described in paragraph 4 of the Stipulation and Appendix B approved by Order No. 93-462.

10. Ridley shall file annual financial information in the form of annual reports and gross receipts reports as required by the Commission. The annual report and the gross receipt report will necessitate the filing of intrastate information. Therefore, Ridley shall keep financial records on an intrastate basis for South Carolina to comply with the

annual report and gross receipts filings. The proper form for filing annual financial information can be found at the Commission's website at www.psc.state.sc.us/forms. The title of this form is "Annual Information on South Carolina Operations for Interexchange Companies and AOS." This form shall be utilized by the Company to file annual financial information with the Commission. Commission gross receipts forms are due to be filed with the Commission no later than October first of each year.

11. The Company shall, in compliance with Commission regulations, designate and maintain an authorized utility representative who is prepared to discuss, on a regulatory level, customer relations (complaint) matters, engineering operations, tests and repairs. In addition, the Company shall provide to the Commission in writing the name of the authorized representative to be contacted in connection with general management duties as well as emergencies which occur during non-office hours. Ridley shall file the names, addresses and telephone numbers of these representatives with the Commission within thirty (30) days of receipt of this Order. The "Authorized Utility Representative Information" form can be found at the Commission's website at www.psc.state.sc.us/forms; this form shall be utilized for the provision of this information to the Commission. Further, the Company shall promptly notify the Commission in writing if the representatives are replaced.

12. The Company is directed to comply with all Rules and Regulations of the Commission, unless a regulation is specifically waived by the Commission.

13. At the hearing, Ridley requested a waiver of Reg. 103-610, which requires that records required by the Commission's Rules and Regulations be maintained in South

Carolina. The record reveals that Ridley's principal headquarters will be located at 470 Norristown Rd., Suite 201, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, and Ridley requests permission to maintain its books and records at its headquarters in that city and state. The Commission finds Ridley's requested waiver reasonable and understands the difficulty presented to Ridley should the waiver not be granted. The Commission therefore grants the requested waiver that Ridley be allowed to maintain its books and records at its principal headquarters. However, Ridley shall make available its books and records at all reasonable times upon request by the Commission or the Commission Staff, and Ridley shall promptly notify the Commission if the location of its books and records changes.

14. Ridley also requests that it be exempt from record keeping policies that require a carrier to maintain its financial records in conformance with the Uniform System of Accounts (USOA). The USOA was developed by the FCC as a means of regulating telecommunications companies subject to rate base regulation. As a competitive carrier, Ridley maintains its book of accounts in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). GAAP is used extensively by interexchange carriers. Moreover, Ridley asserts that because it utilizes GAAP, the Commission will have a reliable means by which to evaluate Ridley's operations and assess its financial fitness. Accordingly, Ridley hereby requests an exemption from the USOA requirements. We grant the Company's request for the reasons stated above.

15. Each telecommunications company certified in South Carolina is required to file annually the Intrastate Universal Service Fund (USF) worksheet. This worksheet provides the Commission Staff information required to determine each

telecommunications company's liability to the State USF fund. The Intrastate USF worksheet is due to be filed annually no later than August 15th.

16. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Mignon L. Clyburn, Chairman

ATTEST:



Bruce F. Duke, Deputy Executive Director

(SEAL)